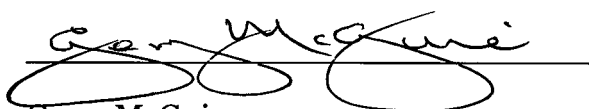


EXTRA-CURRICULAR POLICY

2022 - 2024

Ardgillan College

Date for review: February 2024



Gerry McGuire

Chairperson

Board of Management

24-5-2022

Date ratified by the Board of Management

INTRODUCTION

Ardgillan College delivers a six-year cycle from first year to sixth year. The central mission is to promote a happy and caring school climate where students are encouraged and supported to reach their full potential. The College is committed to providing a person-centred holistic education in which it fosters the personal, social and spiritual development of its students in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The emphasis is placed on quality teaching and learning, positive behaviour and the recognition and honouring of achievement.

POLICY STATEMENT

An important element in a comprehensive curriculum is the provision of a wide range of Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA), including sporting, artistic, musical, cultural, literary, social and leisure activities. The aim of this policy is to establish procedures and practices to ensure the effective running of extra-curricular activities in our school.

RATIONALE

The school recognises that ECA represent a valuable aspect of the learning process and contribute to the development of a rounded individual. ECA supplement and complement in-school learning and activities and provide opportunities for students to broaden their horizons in ways that would not be possible within the confines of the school premises alone. This is particularly important for all students as ECA provide them with opportunities to explore and expand their gifts and talents in other areas.

GOALS

- Ensure consistent approaches to the planning and implementation of ECA in the school
- Provide the school community with a clear understanding of the role of ECA in the school
- Enable students to take full advantage of ECA with a view to achieving a rounded education
- Encourage parents to take an interest in and share responsibility for their children's overall development through support of the school's ECA
- Provide teachers and other staff members with assurance and guidelines to help them with what is effectively voluntary work for the benefit of the students and the whole school community

CONTENT

The content section must address the various specific issues that need to be considered when developing a formal policy for ECA. Although many of the issues will be the same as those affecting other aspects of school activity, the fact that, ECA, by definition, take place outside of school or off the school premises, or both, means that there are certain unique issues that need to be addressed. The major issues that require attention include (in no particular order):

Parental Involvement and Consent

Transport

Health and Safety

Behaviour and Discipline

Supervision

Coordination and Planning

Overnight Stays

Legal Issues

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CONSENT

As holistic education is dependent on a cooperative approach between parents and the school, it is vital that parents are fully aware of and committed to the success of the school's ECA and ECA policy.

In relation to individual ECA, it is important that any policy mandate the delivery of a letter or form to the parents of students that should include the following:

- A description of the activity, including date, place, time, duration, and means of transport
- The purpose of the activity and how it relates to the overall curriculum
- The total cost per student
- A permission form that allows the student to participate in the activity must be returned to the school or filled in online for a student to participate

Due to the frequency and similarity of sporting events, it is not necessary for a letter to be delivered to parents for students participating in such events. However, all parents inform the school of any medical issues that may impact their son/daughter involved in any extra-curricular activities.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

For any school, the wellbeing of the students in its care is a top priority, and ECA create unique situations in which the health and safety issues that are part of the everyday education process take on added significance due to such factors as location and the type of activity in question. It should be noted that approaches to health and safety are not intended to “wrap students in cotton wool” but rather to minimise the risk of serious harm befalling a student. It is clear that bumps, bruises, and even injuries are inevitable in some physical activities and are in fact part of the maturation and development process for children. However, there are also health and safety precautions that those responsible for children during ECA should include perhaps the following:

- The availability of basic First Aid boxes at appropriate ECA to have at hand to deal with minor injuries
- Training in First Aid for teachers involved in ECA
- Close supervision of students that are known to be at a higher health risk than normal (e.g. asthmatics or epileptics)
- Clear procedures for teachers on handling emergency medical situations and administering first aid to be outlined at extra-curricular meeting at the beginning of academic year. Examples include use of defib, ice packs, bandages, wipes etc.
- Adequate levels of adult supervision

BEHAVIOUR AND DISCIPLINE

The success of the school’s ECA program is dependent on the good behaviour of the students involved. The behavioural issues that should be highlighted might include:

- Wearing of full school uniform/PE uniform unless instructed otherwise by the school.
- Compliance with all instructions of bus drivers and other outside authorities with responsibility for ECA, such as instructors or guides
- No leaving the tour group, for any reason, without permission.
- Strict adherence to any safety and health precautions associated with a particular activity.
- The utmost respect to be shown to the public, ECA organizers, and property of others when on ECA.
- Remaining in assigned accommodation and rooms during overnight, or longer, trips
- Students who are placed on Year Head report are not permitted to take part in extra-curricular activities during school time.

Again, as regards disciplinary procedures for transgressions of the code of behaviour while involved in ECA, the standards used within the school proper can be generally

applied. However, it should be noted that many activities have a fun and/or excitement factor associated with them perhaps not found in the classroom environment and that the teacher/student relationship is often best served by being somewhat less formal during ECA than in the classroom. Nonetheless, among the disciplinary options available to teachers should be exclusion from further ECA for cases where a student is overly disruptive or constitutes a danger to himself or others.

SUPERVISION

Recognising that teacher and other staff members give up a large portion of their own time voluntarily to ensure the success of ECA, any ECA Policy should strive to provide teachers with assistance and guidance in their supervisory duties associated with activities. Clearly, teachers have to be extra vigilant when taking students out of the school, having to pay attention to such things as road safety, behaviour on the bus, risks posed by particular venues, and the health and safety of the students at all times. The following can help with such issues:

- Making First Aid and safety courses available to teachers
- Ensuring adequate supervision of all activities
- Ensuring all teachers have the school phone number in case of emergency

COORDINATION AND PLANNING

Coordination and planning can contribute greatly to the smooth running of ECA, so an ECA Policy should establish procedures and parameters for effective planning of activities. As a result, all extra-curricular activities should be booked with the Deputy Principal in advance of the activity taking place. The Coordinator/Committee (C/C) would take primary responsibility for organizing the ECA of the school by helping arrange and coordinate inter-school activities and major school outings and functions. Staff are expected to follow the steps laid out in the staff handbook when organising trips/matches/workshops.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

When ECA events require that a group of students spend one or more nights away from home, there are added issues that the school must address from a supervisory perspective above those associated with a daytrip. These include, among other things:

- Ensuring that the accommodation is clean, safe, and appropriate for the students
- Establishing a list of the items that students should bring with them for such a trip

- Being aware of whether students are prone to any problems that may have relevance to overnight stays (e.g. sleepwalking, bedwetting, or nightmares)
- Having an evacuation plan in the event of a fire and ensuring that the students are familiar with this
- Establishing and policing a curfew for students
- Conducting a headcount every evening and morning to ensure that all students are accounted for
- In cases of overseas trips, making provision for medical care if it should be required
- Providing teachers with a school mobile phone that can be contacted by students on the trip if required
- Providing students with a school mobile phone contact number of a teacher that they can use if needed
- The demands on the physical resources of the students, having regard to their age and capacity
- The dangers to which students may be exposed

SUCCESS CRITERIA

We would hope to see:

- Increased student participation in ECA
- More teachers willing to supervise ECA
- A reduction in disciplinary incidents arising from ECA
- More and varied activities for students to participate in
- Smoother running of the ECA process